

FROM READING TO RESPONSE: YOUR OWN WAY, IN YOUR OWN WORDS!

The poems we have read this week by Joe Survant all represent nature as holding secrets that humans do not share. The humans, standing a bit apart, do not know what the animals do. Nature keeps silent about its secrets, or, at least, humans do not understand its speech. We all share the fascination with the “secret” that these poems reflect. Think of PostSecret, the Internet phenomenon self-described as “shared confessions in art form,” in which people send their deepest secrets to be anonymously posted for the world to see. PostSecret demonstrates both the tremendous curiosity we have about the secrets of others and our desires to tell our own secrets, despite our need to keep them safe. In Survant’s poems, the secret is cosmic or philosophical in nature. In PostSecret, the secrets are personal, human. Some secrets are good, some are hideous. A gift or a party may be a secret. Love may be a secret. On the other hand, the identity of the assassin of John F. Kennedy is also a secret.

You are now to write a poem focused on a secret. Start out by free writing and listing secrets you have and those you long to know but do not. What has been kept secret from you? How did you find out?

Select one of these secrets as the subject of your poem. You can focus your writing on a secret you wish you knew or on one you wish you didn’t. Or, you can choose to write about your self in the moment of revelation. Read the options below and select one, or with permission, write about secrets in your own way. (The options below are meant to help, not fence you in.) Whatever you do, play some in writing this!

A. A Secret You Have, Unfortunately.

Write a poem in which you do NOT tell the secret, but you either use a metaphor to describe the secret or describe the world of those who have this secret. Be sure to use vivid images like those in Survant’s poem.

B. A Secret You Wish You Knew.

Follow Joe Survant’s example in not explaining about the secret or who has it. Just show those who know or hold the answers. Use your word choices, the connotations of the words, to create the emotional atmosphere you need for the secret you are writing about (fear, excitement, bliss).

C. Write about the moment in which an important secret was revealed to you.

Consider using one stanza to convey the “before” and one to convey the “after.”

When you have finished a first draft, make sure that you have created a pattern with the lines and stanzas. If you can, try to use line breaks to create a regular pattern of beats.